

# VIEW FROM THE CANOPY

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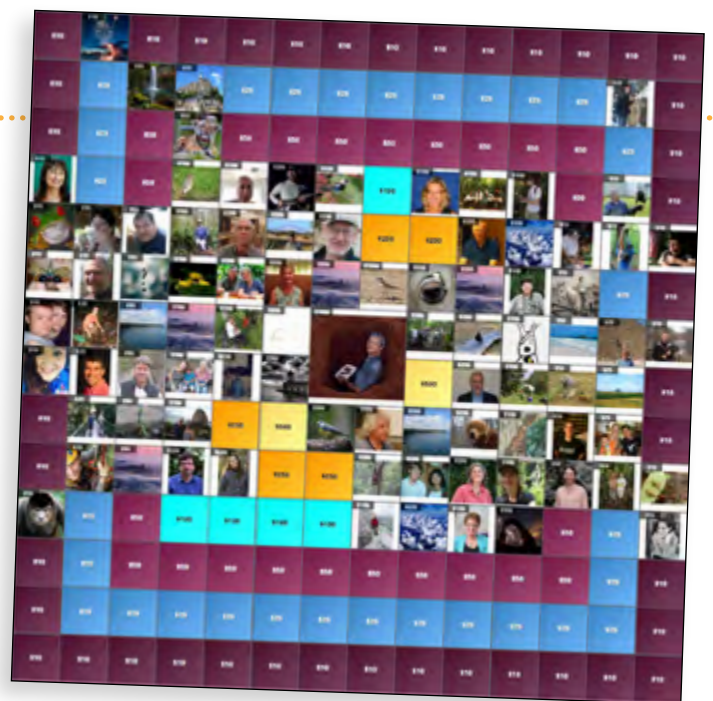
In 2015 OTS committed to a bold plan to increase our energy efficiency and become environmentally sustainable at our field stations. Electricity is our largest expense after the cost of our staff at the stations, so we are installing solar panels to make our sites sustainable. The first batch of photovoltaic panels will be installed this summer at La Selva and will handle approximately 10% of the station's total energy needs. Coupled with proposed renovations to our buildings and new energy efficient air conditioners, our sustainability project is an exciting development with more announcements to come in the years ahead.

## MARCH 2016 FUNDRAISER FOR SOLAR PANELS

In March OTS created a special fundraising campaign to raise money for solar panels at La Selva. Our original goal for the month was to raise \$10,000. Thanks to our Board Members, Alumni, Researchers, Natural History Visitors, and Educational Groups – **we reached that goal in just 1 week!**

We raised our goal to \$15,000. Then, in the final days of March we issued a challenge: if we came within \$500 of the goal, Jonathan Giles (Vice President for Development) would donate the outstanding balance! Either our network loves Solar Panels, or loves emptying Jonathan's wallet because we not only reached \$15,000 by the end of March, we actually raised over \$17,000 with 100 contributors!

Of course this is only the next step in raising funds for our Solar Panel campaign. To date we have raised over \$64,000, and the process will continue in the year ahead. If you are interested in purchasing a Solar Panel for La Selva, or one for other stations, please let us know. **Our goal is to be 100% solar by La Selva's 50th Anniversary in 2018.**





Rammed earth walls and living roof provide substantial weight and stability for foundation building.

PHOTOS BY LAURENCE KRUGER



The initial walls were built using recycled concrete slabs rather than using new bricks. SANParks (South African National Parks) engineers chopped up the old helicopter landing pad/parking lot on the site and produced chunks which were used for the project.

## SKUKUZA SCIENCE LEADERSHIP INITIATIVE LIBRARY AND LAB

In 2014 OTS was awarded \$289,000 by the National Science Foundation program for our field station in Kruger National Park in South Africa. This award extended the research and training capacity of the Skukuza Science Leadership Initiative (SSLI) with the construction of a combined laboratory and library facility.

We are excited to share with you the progress of the new facility. Creating an inspirational and sustainable learning space in Skukuza enhances science and learning opportunities while showcasing the low impact in architectural design and construction materials to reduce our environmental footprint in all aspects of daily living.



The floors are comprised of tightly compacted earth with a veneer of lime/cement, further reducing the carbon footprint of the building.



# OTS UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE PROGRAMS



"This experience has broadened my horizons. It has allowed me to observe biomes and endemic species I had never seen. It gave me a more in-depth understanding of ecology and conservation and it even exposed me to some of my roots..."

**Samih Taylor, African Ecology and Conservation Semester, Spring 2016**

**O**TS' Undergraduate programs provide a comprehensive understanding of trending topics such as the ecology of tropical diseases, the links between environmental change and human health, conservation of biological resources on a changing planet, and field biology in a diversity of habitats. In general few experiences will give students better insight to the complexity, challenge, and excitement of doing science, as well as in the application of the scientific process to the

understanding of real ecosystems and their components. Students will also gain direct exposure to the pressing problems in resource management, conservation, and human health confronting developing nations. In addition, our courses offer a variety of opportunities to gain language skills, engage in cultural exchange via travel or homestays, and/or explore the history of Costa Rica or South Africa as a socio-economic context for understanding current-day issues in ecology, conservation, and health.

For further information on Undergraduate courses, please visit our website: [www.tropicalstudies.org/undergraduate](http://www.tropicalstudies.org/undergraduate)

**T**his fall the Graduate program will offer an interdisciplinary course on Landscape Conservation. In this intensive and practical course, students will gain knowledge about anthropologic and natural factors which interact to produce, restore, and conserve landscapes. Students will apply these concepts on real conservation issues, like reclamation of wetlands and unused agro-forestry areas, linking them with urban realms; in this process, they will interact with local communities, scientists, conservation officers, politicians, and NGO leaders.

For more information visit: <http://education.tropicalstudies.org/en/education/graduate-opportunities/programs/tropical-landscape-conservation.html>



**Support OTS!**

PHOTO BY ANYA CONLON

**Your gift before June 30 is critical** to support our researchers and students this summer.

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- Heliconia \$1,000+  Quetzal \$500+
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(Gifts of \$50 or more) For gifts of \$100 or more, please choose two gifts.

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## About Organization for Tropical Studies

OTS is a non-profit consortium of over 50 research institutions, colleges, and universities from the United States, Costa Rica, Mexico, Peru, South Africa, and Australia. OTS' mission is to provide leadership in education, research, and the responsible use of natural resources in the tropics.



The View from the Canopy is produced by the OTS Development Office. To submit comments or news items, please contact Casey Therrien at 919-668-1687 or via e-mail at [casey.therrien@tropicalstudies.org](mailto:casey.therrien@tropicalstudies.org). Special thanks to Carlos de la Rosa, Laurence Kruger, Andrés Santana Mora, Adriana Baltodano Fuentes, and Lori Breighner for their contributions.

## Awareness makes you a stronger advocate for the tropics!

Follow us on Twitter @ots\_oet, like us on Facebook, [www.facebook.com/ots.oet](http://www.facebook.com/ots.oet), and sign up for OTS' E-Canopy, a monthly English language electronic newsletter for friends of OTS, on our website: [www.tropicalstudies.org](http://www.tropicalstudies.org).



# TOWERS: GOING BACK UP, HIGHER, BETTER, AND STATE-OF-THE-ART

The destruction of two Canopy towers last year by a falling tree energized the La Selva and OTS community to seek the necessary funds to bring back this unique capacity for La Selva researchers. We are ecstatic to announce that we have been recommended for funding from the National Science Foundation to rebuild, improve, and enhance the tower network with a new generation of sensors. The downed towers have been disassembled, cleaned up, and stored awaiting this critical next step. With the new grant, we not only bring an enhanced capacity to the system, but incorporate a team of researchers with excellent questions for long-term research in carbon dynamics under changing climate conditions.



PHOTOS BY CARLOS DE LA ROSA